



MR. MANSFIELD'S
S E R M O N
AT THE
ORDINATION
OF THE
REV. JOHN ELLIOT.



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REV. JOHN LLOYD.

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CHRISTIANITY *the wisdom and
power of G O D.*

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED NOVEMBER 2, 1791,

AT THE
O R D I N A T I O N

OF THE

REVEREND *J O H N E L L I O T*,

To the pastoral care of the church and
society in EAST-GUILFORD.

BY **ACHILLES MANSFIELD, A. M.**

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN KILLINGWORTH.

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CHRISTIANITY the religion and
of GOD.

SERMON


PREACHED BY THE

REV.

ORDINATION



M.A. 1753



CHRISTIANITY the wisdom and power of GOD.

I CORINTHIANS I. 23, 24.

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

THE christian dispensation opens a scene the most astonishing and glorious that ever employed the meditation of man. It appears to have been designated as a theatre, on which to display the glories of the Deity, in acts of unbounded grace. Like its author, it embraces all periods of duration. It originated in the council of redemption, before the morning stars sang together. It looks forward to the closing scene, when time shall be no more. Yea, it will extend its influence to eternity.

All that is great, to awaken the hopes or dread of mankind, is here embosomed. Here the wisdom and power of God, and the exceeding riches of his grace, are seen in triumph over all the sin and ingratitude of a fallen world. And yet this plan of salvation hath been repudiated by multitudes in every age. *We preach Christ crucified*

crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. The words lead,

First, To inquire into some of the grounds of that offence, which has been taken at the cross of Christ.—And,

Secondly, To vindicate it from all reasonable offence, in shewing that it affords a rich display of the divine perfections. *Unto them which are called, we preach Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

First, We are to inquire into some of the grounds of that offence, which hath been taken at the cross of Christ.

The coming of the Son of God into the world was spoken of in that early promise, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.* The same was pointed at by all the prophets. The time when the Messiah should come—his lineage—the circumstances of his birth, life, sufferings and subsequent glory, were so clearly delineated by the ancient prophets, that one would have thought, the Jews could not have misapplied them when he came; and that even the *nations* would have vied with each other in paying their homage to the King of kings. *But he came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

The Jews were offended at him; and their offence was chiefly grounded upon the humility of his appearance, which thwarted all their ideas of his character and kingdom. That spirit of ambition, that lust of domination and empire,

empire, which pushed on the Greeks and Romans to their splendid victories, had already fired their breasts. They had no idea of a suffering prince ; but supposed that the Messiah, when he should come, would not only deliver them from the yoke of the Romans, but spread the dread and triumphs of their arms over all surrounding nations. This opinion was frequently discovered by the apostles themselves, and with difficulty erased from their minds. *They asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ?*

Having such temporal prospects resting upon the Messiah, the Jews refused to own the reputed son of Joseph in that high character. When they saw him in poverty, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and finally bleeding on the cross, apparently unable to save himself, much less their nation, they rejected him with scorn. And neither the fulfilment of prophecy, the stupendous works he had wrought, nor the testimony of the Father, were sufficient to persuade them to own him for their saviour and king. Thus Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-block. There were several other objections they brought against him, which we pass unnoticed.

Next, if we cast an eye upon the Greeks, we shall find that different sentiments formed the ground of their opposition to the gospel.

At

At this time, the Greeks held the foremost rank amongst the nations that cultivated the liberal arts. They carried their philosophical inquiries after truth to great lengths. And did they in the issue find it? We are told in the context; *The world by wisdom knew not God.* The heads of the different sects of the philosophers maintained a plurality of gods. And if they allowed one to be supreme over the rest, they still held him to be under the control of the fates, which they called *eternal necessity*. They removed the superintending care of divine providence from the world, and went into endless debates respecting the origin of the world, the destiny of the soul, &c. And thus, instead of leading their followers to the knowledge of the living and true God, they left them in the labyrinths of impenetrable darkness. Yet they were so elevated with their supposed wisdom, that nothing could please them, but deep and subtle theories in philosophy, concerning the nature of the gods, the first principles of all things, the chief good, and many other intricate questions. And these must be set off with all the embellishments of eloquence and art.

Now as the gospel did not come to them thus recommended; as it contained a plain narration of facts, and the preachers of it were in general plain and illiterate, they rejected it as foolishness. They also took great offence at the sufferings and death of Christ; not discerning the expediency of them, they thought it bordering

dering upon infatuation to proclaim a person to be a great prince and saviour, who had lately been crucified and slain without the gates of Jerusalem ; and to pretend, that pardon and justification were to be obtained through him only, who had so recently been arraigned himself, and condemned as a malefactor. Therefore they had the audacity to discard that as folly, which for wisdom will stand the astonishment and admiration of the intellectual world through eternal ages.

Are we not ready to felicitate ourselves, that we live in an age, in which Christ Jesus and his religion meet with a kinder reception ? With astonishment we behold the blind obstinacy of the Jews, and the foolish rashness of the Greeks, in rejecting Christ. And yet will not an impartial view of the present state of the christian world evince this painful truth, that to multitudes he is still a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence ?

What gives secret offence to many, is, the purity of his religion. They object, that it lays too great restraints upon human nature, requires us to mortify all our lusts, and subdue all our corruptions, to lay aside all malice, envy, and evil speaking, to do good to them who have done none to us, to meet our enemies with love, and their execrations with our prayers, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. But all this, instead of being an objection, is a crown and glory to our holy religion,

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without

without which it could not be proved to be divine.

It might be subjoined, that the refined speculations of science falsely so called, or of the wisdom of this world, which have been substituted in the room of the plain and wholesome doctrines of Christianity, by some of its teachers, have doubtless been an occasion of much offence. In the primitive ages, many of the fathers vainly attempted to introduce the systems of the Greek and oriental philosophy into christianity, which not only deluged the church in wars and blood, but was a fruitful source of infidelity. And may not the scepticism, the malignant jealousies and controversies, that disturb the peace of the church at the present day, be traced to nearly the same source?

We proceed,

Secondly ; To vindicate the gospel from all reasonable offence, in shewing that it affords a rich display of the divine perfections. Unto them which are called, we preach Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

To obviate the objections of the Jews, it is sufficient to observe, that their prospects of worldly greatness and glory from Christ were intirely without foundation, and stood in direct opposition to the testimony of all the prophets.

As to the cavils of the Greeks, they arose chiefly from a partial view of the gospel plan. Considering it as connected mainly with the present life, they did not comprehend it's scope.

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Had they contemplated it in it's relation to futurity, as bringing life and immortality to light, no doubt they would have bowed before it, as a work worthy the wisdom of God, and the highest veneration of men.

But all objections may be silenced, in shewing that it affords a rich display of divine perfections. Here they all shine in unclouded glories, and with pleasure we might trace them all through this stupendous work. But the time restricts us to those mentioned in the text. To begin with the latter. We preach Christ *the wisdom of God*.

Both in the works of creation and redemption, but a small part of God's ways are known unto us : And yet when we contemplate the works of creation, the beauties of the earth beneath, and the dazzling glories of the firmament on high ; when we behold vast orbs of light, launching through boundless fields of ether, and yet all moving in the most perfect harmony, in obedience to the high commands of *Jehovah*, what heart can fail to adore, or what tongue to exclaim, *How manifold are thy works, Lord God Almighty, in wisdom hast thou made them all !*

But what wisdom is displayed in the work of redemption ? Man in his estate of innocence was under a law, which had the sanction of great penalties and great rewards. And after transgression had taken place, the great question was, How can man be rescued from his deserved

served fate, in a way that shall secure the honors of the divine character and government ? The truth and justice of God must be maintained. Heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one jot or tittle of the law shall fail. To relax the penalty would destroy the respectability of the law ; and yet to carry it into execution would sink man in perdition beyond the reach of hope or relief. In this alarming condition, no finite wisdom could point out a way of relief ; no created arm could work salvation. But behold ! the wisdom of God hath provided a Mediator, who is mighty to save. Behold ! the Son of God steps forth in our behalf, *Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me.*

And if we trace the execution of this undertaking, what increasing wonders meet our astonished view ? What man or angel would have dared to frame the idea, that the Son of God, the King eternal, immortal and invisible, should become incarnate, and take upon him the form of a servant, that reparation might be made to the law in that nature which had transgressed ? That in human nature, he might make expiation for sin, exhibit a perfect example of obedience and virtue, and bring in everlasting righteousness, as the foundation of our justification and acceptance with God ? What manner of wisdom as well as love is here ? This is what angels desire to look into. Well might the prophet stand astonished at the distant view of this :

this : *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL.* In this way the honors of the divine character and government may be secured, and yet sinners saved. *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other.*

Unrivalled displays of wisdom might be traced in the history of our Saviour's life, sufferings, death and resurrection. There was nothing that his enemies had more at heart, than his crucifixion, hoping thereby to render abortive his great undertaking. But by the cross Christ conquered his enemies with their own weapon, spoiled principalities and powers, and led captivity captive. No less illustrious are the displays of wisdom in the particular application of the work of redemption to the souls of men. *Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and compleat redemption.*

But after all our researches, the wisdom of God in this great work will remain to our scanty understandings a sea without a shore. The Cherubims, which bowed their faces over the mercy-seat, were designed to teach us, that angels pry into these things with pleasing admiration, and yet are never able fully to comprehend them. What reason then have we to adopt those words of the apostle, *Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit,*
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seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

We preach Christ, not only the wisdom of God, but *the power of God*. After his resurrection, our Saviour consoled his mourning disciples with this declaration, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*. Hence he gave this commission unto them ; *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature !* And the glorious power and success that should crown their labors, and those of their successors, were represented to St. John in a vision. Saith he, *And I saw, and behold, a white horse ; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer. And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Although we would not presume to say, that these passages have already received their full accomplishments, yet how remarkably did the success that attended the first promulgation of the gospel, answer to these sublime descriptions ?*

At the crucifixion of Jesus, a thick and almost impenetrable cloud hung over Zion : And well might the daughters thereof have hung their harps upon the willows. The apostles themselves were ready to despond, saying, *We*
trusted

trusted it had been he, which should have redeemed Israel. After he rose and ascended, the world (which was the field of their labours) lay before them in wickedness, impregnated with principles of hostility to the gospel. They were unlearned, and had to encounter, not only great and formidable nations, but all their violent prejudices, all their systems of philosophy, idolatry and false religion, which had now received the sanction of a long establishment. Under these circumstances, to all human appearance, they had nothing to look for but the total ruin of their cause.

But on the day of Pentecost, endowed with power from on high, they began to preach the gospel, and things soon put on a different appearance. There were at that time dwelling at Jerusalem, strangers from almost every nation. Now when all these heard the apostles speak, each one in his own tongue, they were astonished, and convinced; and many thousands of them believed. This opened a door for the promulgation of divine truth among all those nations to which they belonged.

So rapid was the spread of the gospel, that it is said, within about thirty years after our Saviour's crucifixion, it was diffused, not only over the greatest part of the Roman empire, but had reached as far as Parthia and India, some thousand miles from Jerusalem. Well might the apostle say, *The weapons of our warfare*

fare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. The apostle did not here make an empty flourish with his weapons, without having tried their strength. Cloathed with this divine armour, the shield of faith and the sword of the spirit, the apostles took the field, and became truly sons of thunder, before whom no opposition could stand.

Historians have exhausted their pens to celebrate the victories of the Alexanders and Cæsars, which were but bubbles of a day. But what tongue can express the solid victories and triumphs of the word of God? Carnal warriors have led some few vanquished princes after their chariots, to grace their triumphs. But what mighty nations have been seen following the banner of the church, to celebrate the triumphs of redeeming love? who were led, not in chains and fetters, as condemned prisoners to the place of execution; but like Mordecai the Jew, with crowns and diadems upon their heads. So great has been the power of the gospel, that kings and queens, who were full of haughtiness and pride, have been brought to stoop from their thrones, and cast themselves at the feet of Him who reigns king in Zion, esteeming it a greater honor to be servants and subjects

subjects in his kingdom, than to rule over the fairest kingdoms among men.

The early progress of the gospel alarmed its enemies throughout all the Roman empire. That empire was represented in Daniel's vision by the fourth beast, *which was dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; which had great iron teeth, and devoured and brake in pieces.* It had overrun many other kingdoms, and extended itself almost to the bounds of the then known world. Now upon the promulgation of the gospel within its bounds, that vast empire, in its highest pitch of glory, even in the Augustan age, rose up in arms to extinguish the christian name. But the heralds of the gospel sustained the shock, in a manner that plainly shewed that God was with them. Without any arms in their hands, without any shield but the cross, they not only stood their ground, but prevailed ; so that in a few centuries, that great empire was brought to change its gods, and embrace the christian faith.

This remarkable event, effected by means so extraordinary, I think forms an epocha in the history of men, which admits of no parallel either from ancient or modern times, and is a plain proof that *we preach Christ the power of God.*

Should it be objected, that the spread of the Mahometan religion was equally rapid and powerful ; the answer is most clear. The spread of that religion is to be accounted for
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upon the same principles that account for the rapid victories of the Grecian hero. Means were employed adequate to the effects produced. It was propagated by the power of the sword. The Saracens held out to the nations conquered by their arms, the alcoran in one hand, and the sword in the other ; and those who refused to pay their homage to the former, were doomed to receive their speedy fate from the latter. But the Christians were so far from having recourse to the sword, that they gave themselves up as sheep to the slaughter ; like their Master, by bleeding and dying, they conquered and triumphed.

Methinks we need look no further than our own land, for proofs of the power of the gospel. But about a century and an half ago, this land was a kingdom of darkness, filled with naked savages, the worshippers of demons. Here satan had held his reign for ages. But where now is this kingdom of darkness ? It is chased away before the light of the gospel, as the shadows of the night before the light of the morning sun. Where altars were lately erected to the prince of darkness, we now behold temples reared to the honor of the living God : And where once human victims were offered, and the horrid and gloomy rites of idolatry were performed, we now hear hosannas to the Son of David.

But before all other things, the power of the gospel is seen in its effects upon the hearts
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and dispositions of men. To change the very nature of men, to take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh, is the sole prerogative of the gospel of Christ. False religion can lay no claim to this power. Not all the systems of idolatry and false religion in the universe can regenerate one soul into a participation of the Divine Image. But by the Spirit of Christ, which accompanies the gospel, multitudes in every age have been brought, not only to change their name and profession, but their very hearts, their lives and conversation. Sinners of all descriptions have felt the transforming power of divine truth. Violent and sanguinary persecutors, who were breathing nothing but threatnings and slaughter to the church, have been suddenly divested of the heart of tigers, and cloathed with the disposition of lambs. Even those who have been proof against all other means, upon whom the prayers and tears of parents and friends could make no impression, have often been arrested in their mad career of wickedness, and brought to throw themselves as blanks at the feet of the cross, prepared to receive any inscription from sovereign grace, saying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Thus have they been made, not only good members of society, but meet subjects to inherit eternal life. Saith the apostle to the Corinthians, 1st. Epistle, vi. 9, 10, 11. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters,*

ters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you ; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Mankind, in their natural estate, are represented as being *dead in trespasses and sins, led captive by satan at his pleasure.* But when Christ Jesus comes to them in the power of his word, he knocks off their chains ; brings them out of *darkness into his marvellous light ;* and from the house of bondage, to enjoy the most enlarged *freedom of the sons of God.*

A still more visible display of the power of the word of God we are taught to look for in that happy age, when *the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the wolf shall dwell with the lamb*—When the most hostile natures shall be reconciled, and dwell together in the utmost harmony and peace—When the poor heathen from America, and the dreary deserts of Africa, shall come to Mount-Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord—But I desist. Thus *we preach Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

In the review of the subject you will anticipate me in observing, that it may serve to establish and confirm our faith in the gospel of Christ. He hath left us a precious promise
that

that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. And when we take a view of the church wading through bloody persecutions, and surmounting all opposition, it affords conviction that it rests upon an arm that is almighty to save. Every thing that rests upon an arm of flesh is fading and transitory in its nature. The most brilliant productions of genius, the most stable monuments of human art and power, are all swept away before the hand of time. The great and powerful kingdoms of the world have their rise and fall. Having reached their meridian, they fall into decay, and upon their ruins other kingdoms arise. But the kingdom of Christ survives them all. Borne up in an ark of safety, it rides over the tumultuous scene, and beholds the changes, revolutions and catastrophies, which are passing over the kingdoms of this world, without any hazard of participating in their fate. This kingdom then is built upon other foundations, and is not of this world. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

I might observe, that this subject calls upon our hearts to celebrate the praises of redeeming love—That it administers great terror to sinners, and at the same time opens animating and glorious prospects to the righteous. But leaving these, with many other particulars, to your private improvement, we proceed to the addresses usual on such occasions.

First,

First, To the PASTOR ELECT.

Dear Sir,

As I have had the direction of your early studies, I shall lay aside all the restraints and formalities of a stranger, and give vent for a moment to the effusions of undissembled affection.

After the great breach that was made in this church, by the removal of its late worthy pastor, upon inquiry, who shall go and speak unto this people? With joy we behold you this day standing forth before God and this assembly, saying, send me. And we wish you, we pray you, God speed. You are now to be inducted into the office of a bishop in the church of the living God. This is not only a good, but an honorable work: In this you will be employed a co-worker with a long list of prophets, apostles, pastors and teachers, who have shone as the lights of the world, and the excellent of the earth: yea, a co-worker with the holy angels, and with Jesus Christ. Having such illustrious examples before your eyes, you will gird up the loins of your mind, run and not be weary.

In this undertaking, your great work will be, to save yourself and them that hear you. Can any other work be of equal importance? *What would it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* Even the heart of an apostle was ready to sink under the weight of this charge, saying, *who is sufficient for these things?*

Not

Not a stranger to the anxieties that hang about your heart, I would not enlarge upon the greatness of your work, but suggest a word for your encouragement and relief. To this great work, much wisdom and strength are necessary, and you know where to go for them. *We preach Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* You lack wisdom; ask it of him who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. You need grace and strength; go to him who hath said, *All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.* You will look to him for all that you need, for all that you hope for; and he hath said, *My grace shall be sufficient for you; Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end.*

That your labours may be crowned with success, you will make the example of Jesus Christ your study and your pattern. Like him you will be engaged about your Father's work, and animated to work while it is day, because the night cometh. Having all pride hidden from your eyes, you will be humble, meek and holy; not thinking it too much to condescend to men of low degree, and even to bow down as upon your knees before sinners, praying them in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God; for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how from the throne of the universe he humbled himself to the form of a servant, and came into the world, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Should it be your unhappiness to find any your enemies, because you have told them

them the truth, when you are reviled revile not again, but rather seek to conquer their enmity with your love and your prayers. Let the solemn day of accounts, and the glorious award of the good and faithful servant lie with suitable weight upon your mind.

Again, that your work may be easy and delightful to yourself, you will perform it in love. Jacob esteemed a fourteen years service but light and easy, for one whom he loved. And if you have a supreme love for your Saviour and your people, you will be willing to spend and be spent in their service. It will render light and easy all the painful labours, watchings, temptations and trials of the gospel ministry. This our Saviour insisted upon with Peter, as a necessary qualification in all those who would assume the office of feeding his sheep and lambs : *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* Were the same question put to you, we trust you might in some good measure answer as he did; *Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* Then let it be manifested by feeding his sheep and lambs, which are the price of his blood. And my beloved friend, methinks your heart can't but expand with compassion and love for immortal souls, when you behold them standing on the verge of eternity, and there hanging upon your lips for the word and bread of life; for instruction how they may make a leap from
this

this vale of tears up into Abraham's bosom. And we ardently wish your exertions of love may be crowned with success.

As the patriarch Jacob returned into the earthly Canaan greatly multiplied and greatly blessed, so when your labours are at an end, may you be admitted into the heavenly Canaan with a train following; and if it be asked, who are these? May your answer be, these are the children, which God hath graciously given me. In that day, may you be admitted to participate in the honors that await those that turn many to righteousness, of shining as the brightness of the firmament, and as stars for ever and ever.

A short address to the church and society in this place will relieve your patience.

My beloved friends and neighbours. But a few days ago, many of us were assembled in this house of prayer, with you to weep, and mourn and pray, on account of the translation of your late aged, laborious and faithful Pastor;* whose praises live among the churches, and whose name is embalmed in the hearts of all those, who knew his worth, his extensive erudition, his meekness, his fervent piety, his persevering fidelity to his God and his people, and his well grounded peace and serenity of mind, when his hour was come: Every beholder

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* The Rev'd JONATHAN TODD, who died February 24th, 1791, in the 78th year of his age, and in the 58th of his ministry.

wished to die the death of the righteous; and to have his last end be like his. And now while the tears are scarce wiped from your eyes, another pastor is ready to be set over you, to break unto you the bread of life. Therefore you will permit us this day with you to rejoice, and sound the organ of praise.

The great Shepherd of Israel hath been pleased to preserve you in your broken state, from being scattered as sheep that have no shepherd, and to lead you with an honorable unanimity to the choice of one to be set over you, who is so acceptable to his brethren, and whom your ascending Elijah pointed out to receive his mantle. The hand of Divine Providence you will trace with adoring gratitude and thankfulness of mind.

This man of your choice now stands before you ready to devote himself, his life, his talents and his all to your service. The solemn charge you will soon hear given unto him. And may I not first charge you before God and the holy angels, that you receive him as an ascension gift from the great Head of the church—that you love him, attend to his ministrations, support him, and pray for him. It is an apostolic exhortation, *Brethren, pray for us*. He will come to you with the treasure of the gospel of reconciliation. But remember, you have this treasure in an earthen vessel, which may easily be broken down, and crumbled into dust. This
may

may be done by a neglect of his labours, and ill treatment of his person. Let every one guard against a false ambition of rendering himself important, by involving his pastor or church in needless trouble. When a faithful minister of Christ meets with such usage from his people, whom he loves and prays for, his heart will bleed of a thousand inward wounds. Yet this is what will sometimes take place, *for the servant is not exalted above his Lord.* But we are persuaded better things of you, brethren, though I thus speak. Under the ministry of your expected pastor, you hope to be formed with your children for the heavenly world. Therefore strengthen his hands, and encourage his heart. This you will do by attending to his public labours. Of all the means of salvation a preached gospel is the chief. *It hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe :* Therefore saith Moses, *Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.* A neglect of divine ordinances is a fashionable evil at the present day ; which arises, either from a stupid inattention to the utility of the gospel both to the present and future interests of men ; or from an itching desire always to hear something new. As to those of the latter description, it is impossible for the most shining genius, added to the most intense application, to feed them

them always with food adapted to their taste, to secure their constant attendance, or to keep alive their applauses. . . . Therefore you will not come up to this house of prayer with an expectation of hearing your teacher always speak as never man spake. You will desire nothing but the *sincere milk of the word*, and seek no other doctrine than that which engrossed an apostles labours, *Christ Jesus, and him crucified*. And may you so hear, and so receive the truth, in the love of it, as finally to receive the end of your faith, and the end of our preaching, even the salvation of your souls.

In one word, from the solemn transactions of this day, we may all see, that though ministers and christians die, the church lives. In a few days this numerous assembly will be gathered unto a far greater congregation. But the church will survive, and will continue, until the angel of God shall summon the whole world to appear before the dread tribunal of the Great Day. Then all the true members of the church shall be gathered in from all denominations, and from every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people, and join in the incessant praises of redeeming love; while all its enemies shall be shut out, in outer darkness, without a beam of light, or hope, to dispel the gloom.

Are *these* objects of our faith? What a sacred ambition then should it awaken within us, to
join

join with God's people in this world, that we may share with them in the glories of another ? Let it be the summit of our hearts' desire, to be born in Zion, and to have our names written in the Lamb's book of life. And finally may we all join with the general assembly and church of the first-born, in surrounding the throne of God, *with harps and golden vials in our hands, saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

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Let it be the summit of our hearts' desires, to
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church of the first-born, in surrounding the
throne of God, with praise and glory, with
in our hands, saying, and bowing, and
glory, and praise, and thanksgiving, and
on the throne, and a Lamb for ever and



A M E N.